Black.Smoking.Angel [English] (/en/story/127504/black-smoking-angel-english/)

Donate to this author
(/en/story/payment/127504/)

ADVERTISEMENT

Follow story •••

24 chapters 19min 8s reading time

ADVERTISEMENT

< Chapter Ten: Angelique VI (/en/story/127504/chapter/chapter-nine-zara-and-david-iv-870974/)

Febraury, 2030

It was raining very, very hard. It was that type of rain... a heavy rain. You know, when the drops are so big and fall with so much force that you can literally hear them individually pounding against the

ground. Judging by what I remember, it must have been around two in the afternoon, but the clouds in the sky were so opaque and dark that it wouldn't have been hard to think that it was almost night already. The tall buildings that surrounded us didn't help at all, they deprived the streets and alleys of the little light that could reach them.

I'm used to silent cities. When people leave a place, it becomes so, so peaceful that the only thing you can hear are the rainfall, some dogs, birds... but in this city, the most striking element was the wind. That cold wind that came from the south and gave a certain inclination to the rain that was hitting on the debris of the buildings. I don't know, maybe it had to do with the time of year we passed through, but the wind was certainly the protagonist, even more than the water.

Hradec Králové, Czech Republic. We passed by following the Elbe River along the north side, and then we crossed the river but... but this happened before crossing it. They were not from Amere,

they were another type of enemies that we know very well. A kind of enemies...worse than Amere in many ways, although they always appear in smaller numbers. They don't have a name for themselves, but when I was in the army, we used to call them Vaterlandslos.

Luckily, the rain was as heavy as I narrated at the beginning, reader. Otherwise, the noise we made stepping on those puddles on the ground would have been a total giveaway of our escape route. I was running ahead, although the distance between us was barely more than a meter. Two hooded figures moving through the passages that the spaces between the buildings provided us, giving each other the non-verbal signal to advance when we deemed it opportune, and stopping for only half a second to re-evaluate our path and take another direction when we heard footsteps beyond, some voice or when the screaming of some weapon alerted us.

Running away from battles is not strange. It's normal when: a) you don't know for sure how the forces on the other

side are composed, and b) your effective force only counts with so few agents. Do I make my point clear? Angelique and I never engage in direct combat if we're not sure we have the advantage and certainty that we're going to win. When the initiators are on the other side, it's almost always a better idea to hide and from there, from those shadows that prevent us from being riddled, determine the power of the enemies to decide whether to face them or flee.

But, what to do when the action is so intense and the enemies so well trained that hiding is not an option? What to do when all that's left is to run and run, and no optimal escape route can be seen to definitely get away from such an overwhelming situation? What are you supposed to do when the odds are totally against you? Life is not an action movie, nor a book or a video game, facing fifteen armed men alone while they chase you is a suicide almost every time. Something like taking down such a number of hostiles can only be achieved if you have a cautiously

elaborated plan, and at least one competent ally and even then, it's definitely better to avoid so under any circumstance.

With this in mind, what was the best thing Angel and I could do?

The clothes weighed me down. Yes, the clothes. Not the Benelli on my back, not the G36 in my hands, not the ammunition inside my coat. The clothes. The weight of the soaked fabric pulled at me, trying to forcefully bring me down to the ground, where I would only know my final destiny. Angelique didn't seem to suffer the same as me. Although she was behind me, her steps were much lighter and even less noisy, like a cat wandering at night, jumping from roof to roof; majestic and beautiful.

An unexpected voice coming from around the corner in front of us, in one of those many alleys, made us stop in our tracks. She looked behind us, but I know there was nothing noteworthy or she would have mentioned it, and I, aggressive

as lightning, leaned out pressing the stock of my rifle against my shoulder, with the trigger already halfway through its travel, whose trajectory was already imprinted on my memory.

And there they were. Attentive, but not ready enough to prevent my attack, also carrying rifles, and even light protection, wanting to flank what was our safest route.

With short bursts but at a rate so high that they didn't even have the time to respond, I forced my weapon to spit out pieces of lead until both had fallen to the ground. I don't know if they screamed when they fell or if it was the sound of the rain, but some noise stopped being heard when I finished them off down there. Angelique also leaned out to check the status of the threat, and no more than a second later we resumed our run.

We never really rehearsed it. No, Angel doesn't have that kind of training, but she knew very well that she had to take the lead as we advanced and I reloaded my weapon. If I had counted correctly, I had

about fifteen rounds left in that magazine. Inside my coat I had one empty and two full ones; one of the latter took the place of the fifteen-round one, and only then did I return to the front.

We had fired. We had opened fire again, and that only meant that the rest of the enemies were once again aware of our position, so our feet had to move faster than ever. Running was exhausting, especially if we also had to occupy our heads constantly calculating the most appropriate path.

But there's always something.

It's not surprising, I'm human, and humans make mistakes. Constantly. All the time, every day, every hour, we all make mistakes. The only difference between you and me, reader, is that my mistakes can cost me my life or, worse, cost Angelique her life.

We came across a dead end, adorned with garbage bags and some more debris, but that wasn't a problem, since the window to the inside of a building that I

think may have been a pub stood before us. I took one of the many debris from the ground and threw it at the window to break it. Without me ordering her to, Angelique turned around and positioned herself to spy around the corner, making sure no one was coming while I used the stock of my G36 to remove the largest and most dangerous remaining pieces of glass.

"Come on!"

I jumped into the ruined pub, filled with parts of chairs, bottles, and a bar broken in half, and seconds later Angel arrived by my side. No time, no time. There was no time to think, no time to appreciate, and no time to contemplate. We had completely changed the way to afront our escape. We were no longer in the alleys where we could take alternate routes. Inside a building we could only go up, or perhaps down, or go outside. And I decided to go outside. I jogged to the front door and there was no one on the other side. I opened the door and there was no one

along the street either. Only the asphalt, the sidewalks, and another building in front. It was a wide area where we could be seen clearly, but... but, I still made the mistake of thinking it was the best alternative.

"Look there. The entrance to yet another set of alleys. That's where we're going, Angel."

"Okay."

So obedient, so efficient, so relentless. So incapable to tell me it was a bad idea. I kicked the door open and sprinted without hesitation, forcing myself not to hesitate. The rain hit me relentlessly again, but I didn't even consider stopping. This time I couldn't hear the footsteps of my dear companion behind me, perhaps the rain had grown even more intense, or maybe it was the adrenaline. What I could hear, and it made me feel an immense terror that made me think, if only for a fraction of a second, that our journey was finally going

to end, was the sound of a projectile going supersonic and then Angelique screaming. We were no more than two meters away from being safe in the alleys again. Yes, it was less than two meters. I spun around as I howled the name of the person who so easily had become my reason to keep going, and I saw her lying on the ground, holding onto her leg. I felt like the scene lasted for hours. The beautiful face of the angel I carried with me contorted in pain, the submachine gun she carried only staying as part of her thanks to the strap around her shoulder, her trembling hands pressing on her thigh while the water beneath her slowly but oppressively turned red. It broke my heart. I lifted my head, and there was someone standing on the roof of the pub. They also had a submachine gun which name I don't remember in their hands; that person dressed and looked like a ghost, that's all I can say about them. As reactively as when you remove your hand from something that is too hot, I raised my weapon and opened fire, more to suppress than to kill.

They even hid behind a column holding the building's water tanks. I grabbed Angel's arm with great strenght and began dragging her towards the alley while continuing to throw suppressive fire with my other hand. Of course, the aim was negligible, but the noise and the chunks of concrete jumping were enough for any sane person to decide not to stick their head out.

"You'll be fine! Don't scream! Stop screaming, Angelique!"

One part of my brain wanted to focus on calming her down, but the majority was occupied with directing my body to get her out of danger. And we were once again only partially safe in those alleys. She wasn't screaming anymore, only because I ordered her not to, but she was sobbing and holding onto her leg tightly, unable to stop crying. It truly destroyed me from the inside.

I had no choice but to sling my rifle on

my back as well, I had to carry Angelique with me. There was no time, no time for anything at all. I lifted the girl onto my chest, placed my left forearm underneath her thighs so she could sit on it and rest her body weight on my left shoulder; this way she could also look behind me and inform me about anything that deserved my attention, and then I ran as fast as my disadvantaged situation allowed me to.

My Beretta was already gripped in my right hand, its threatening barrel being the first to observe every corner I turned around, running while ignoring my own exhaustion and the fear induced from feeling Angelique's warm blood staining my abdomen. I don't know how long I ran like that, while also trying to pretend I didn't hear the groans that the girl released into my ear, and containing the urge to stop right there and hug her to console her. I also don't remember how many times I had to change my route or how many times I had to stop to catch my breath and return fire when we were discovered, and I don't know how many

times I circled that small town... but, at some point, everything ended.

Between hideout and hideout, hour after hour, route after route, we ended up on the second floor of a business building. I let Angelique rest on a long black sofa while I watched through the window as the little heads chasing us moved from side to side until they got tired. I don't think they ever really gave up on finding us, but they certainly reduced their efforts after a whole hour passed with no signs of us.

"... I don't see anyone getting closer, and I can't hear them either. Rain is calming down, so it should be easy to hear anyone getting inside this building or inside the nearby ones. I think... I think we are momentarily safe, Angel."

I turned to recapitulate. It was a mediocre office, like any you'd see in a B-class movie. A desk, some slides and diplomas adorning the walls, cabinets, a coffee table, and the sofa. I walked over to

my partner, who still hadn't stopped crying, and knelt down beside her to speak as softly as my ragged voice allowed me to. It was so heartbreaking. While she lay stretched out, her left hand didn't let go of her wound: the entry hole of a very small bullet on the outer side of her left thigh, there was no exit hole and all in all, it was rather safe. Without taking my eyes off that beautiful face that was sadly contaminated with pain and tears, and without getting any resistance coming from her, I loosened her shorts and slid them down just enough to see the area clearly, and rested my fingers around it.

"Do you think you can walk?"

Her response was just weakly shaking her head. I couldn't blame her. Maybe the wound wasn't precisely life-threatening, but Angelique was, is, a young girl, so her reaction to being shot for the first time was only to be expected. With my other hand I took hers and then I could feel just how much she was trembling, maybe a

little from the cold water that soaked her clothes, but I'm sure it was also from the shock of the situation. I withdrew her hand to see the wound.

"Please, try not to make a noise "

She nodded, and I could only barely hear the whimper of pain that escaped when I used my fingers to gently stretch her skin and get a better look at the wound. Such an obedient, efficient, perfect girl.

"It's not deep. I think... yeah I think I can see the projectile, I guess the bone stopped it. I don't know as much about medicine as I would like to, Angel, but I think it's not as dangerous. Look, it's not bleeding as much as before. Maybe you were lucky and it didn't hit any important veins, or... or I don't know. I really don't know about this stuff."

"... it... h-hurts..."

"Yes, of course it hurts. Of course it

hurts..."

Perhaps those words described better how much it hurt me to see her so distressed than they described her actual state. The tips of my fingers were slowly caressing her smooth skin; that was me trying to calm myself down. Yes, I had to be the calm one. Even though nerves and guilt were eating me up - guilt. Guilt? Was it guilt? I think it was. I think it was guilt what I felt seeing Angelique like this. No matter how you look at it, a girl like her should never be involved in this kind of situation. It was all because of me. All of it. All the pain.

Everything Angelique had suffered since her name became Angelique was solely my fault. Nobody else's. And it could have all been avoided. Her life could be so much better if I had never interfered in her existence. I am the evil in Angelique. I am the bad in Angelique. She might look at me and find a guardian, but it is an undeniable fact that I am, by all accounts and under all means, the worst thing that

could ever have happened to her. It is also another fact that she is my everything, and I love her - no, I love her so much, much more than my own life.

"Angel."

"Yes?"

"I have to cure the wound."

"Fine..."

"And in order to cure it, I have to take the bullet out."

"..."

"Leaving it inside could lead to potential risks. It could cause another wounds, it could lead to poisoning, it could..."

She knew it perfectly. She's very smart, she has always been. But, as sly as she could be, smartness never eclipses feelings. Her eyes... those abyssal blue eyes, as blue as the night sky, that pierced my heart, got all wet again as she turned her face down. Angelique was scared. She feared pain, she feared me, and even then... as she didn't

put up resistance when I began undressing her, she also didn't stop me when she saw me taking that small first aid kit from my backpack.

"Alright..."

I left everything that was inside the kit by my leg, and tried to ignore everything around me to focus on that wound that, although slightly, was still bleeding. I had to remember the steps. No, I couldn't remember them, but one never forgets the most important ones and, for some reason, the brutest yet most effective is what remains in us. I picked up the ethanol and opened it up, a far away thunder could be heard after a its lighting illuminated my side. Just before pouring it on her, I looked her in the eye.

"Don't scream."

She opened her mouth to reply, but the burning feeling from the liquid

appropiated all of her senses.

"AH-!"

As soon as she let out that first yelling, my free hand dropped strongly over her mouth. I thought something like that could happen, but I didn't want to give her a cloth to bite on in order to avoid scaring her even more. I poured more and more while she suffered. Those drowned screams, those salty tears wetting her cheeks and my fingers, those eyelids shut with utmost strenght. Her knees rubbed against each other as her nails digged into my forearm, which pressed downwards to prevent her from screaming louder. White foam came from her flesh and the alcohol poured to both sides of her thigh. I averted my gaze towards the window and, while I couldn't see too much from there, I also could see nobody changing their course towards us. I didn't think about the pain in my forearm, for it was nothing compared to how much my angel was suffering. Soon she began instinctively bitting me but,

even if I could feel her teeth pierceing me, I didn't stop pushing down until her thigh stopped trembling, letting me know her nerves were getting numb. I took my hand down, and wiped it on my clothes.

"You're strong, Angelique..."

Fighting such numbing pain left the girl exhausted, and so the moaning that came when I used those tiny forceps to take that .22 bullet out from her insides were quiet. I bandaged the wound and taped it firmly. I couldn't stitch it, mainly because I didn't know how, so I could only hope it was small enough to heal by itself... and that's the reason why Angelique still shows a not-so-cute scar in that place. I'm sorry, Angelique. I'm sorry for not doing better.

The moment I looked at her, I faced the equivalent to being reminded of every evil deed you have done in your life. Those innocently guilty eyes observing me. Asking me why had she to go through all that when she had never done anything

bad by own volition. Yes, it was guilt. The guilt building up inside me was unbearable. Even then, I couldn't feel any kind of reproach coming from Angelique. I guess on its place she was trying to pass on some kind of slaved thankfulness. No, don't thank me. You must never thank me for anything, Angelique. Don't do it. Just don't...

"Everything is fine."

I couldn't control myself properly and, after helping her dressing up again, I leaned on her, grabbed her head with both hands and shortly kissed her lips. I would like to imagine what she might have seen once we parted. Maybe she saw the weathered, tired face of a man that owns nothing but that he can see; that he can touch. I wonder... every single day I wonder if Angelique knows how much she means to me. No, she must not know, and back then she couldn't even picture it.

Maybe it was my long hair, maybe the

beard growing on my face after a week without shaving, maybe how spent I looked, maybe the droplets that hanged from my bangs, whatever it was, she looked up at me for a while.

She... was she really not going to oppose to anything I did?

Until that day, I had never seen Angelique showing so many emotions, and it made me feel terrible that such a painful event was necessary for it. No, I don't want to live through something like that ever again. I don't want to see her suffer again. I wish I could make us disappear, Angel. I wish I could snap my fingers and take us away to a place where we never have to worry about anything, where you never have to fire a weapon again nor feeling the fear of seeing muzzles aiming at you.

That was the second time I kissed Angelique's lips.

. . .

The very moment I write this chapter.
Winter, 2031

What was the point of telling you this story, reader? I don't know either. Sometimes I think that I simply want to leave a record of all and every memories I have about that girl, as if I myself feared forgetting them all, because all of them, everyone of them, are extremely important to me. Because all of them show a side of Angel that I hadn't seen before. Because all of them are, to me, even if they are not the most pleasing, as valuable as gold was to a portuguese merchant, or as foreign land was to an english colonizer.

Angelique... I'm not afraid of paving a road with blood if that road can lead you to a slightly better life.

I'm inside this room, alone and out of cigarettes. I should maybe walk around the city and try to find a closed box, or visit the comune hoping they could give me one in exchange for something they may want.

Day after day I feel worse, I'm not sure why, maybe I'm getting ill, maybe the years and the wounds weigh on me, or maybe my soul is so drained that it can't keep up anymore. But you don't have to worry about it. No, you don't have to worry about anything. I'll deal with everything. Keep reading your books, away from my being that bleeds on these blank notebooks. Everything will get better, Angel.

Everything will be alright, Angel.

April 24, 2023, 10:59 p.m. 0 comments

FOLLOW STORY Report

(/EN/DASHBOARD/CHAPTER/882976/LIKE/#LIKED-BUTTON-882976)

Read next chapter > Chapter Eleven: Zara and David V

ADVERTISEMENT

Leave a comment

EC

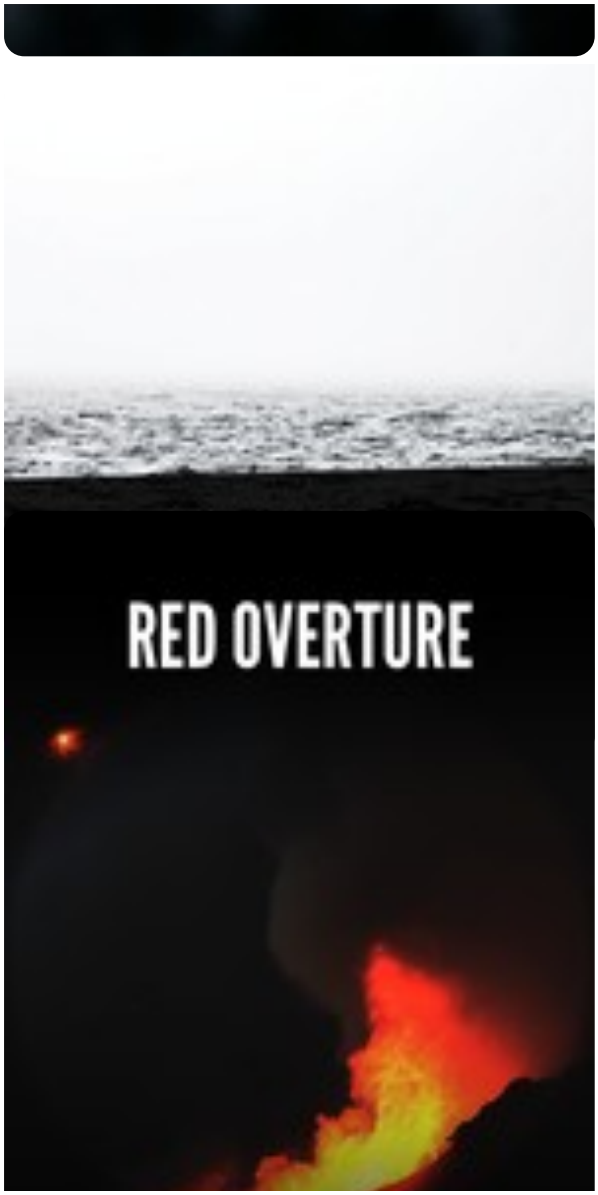
1000 characters left

Send

No comments yet. Be the first to say something!

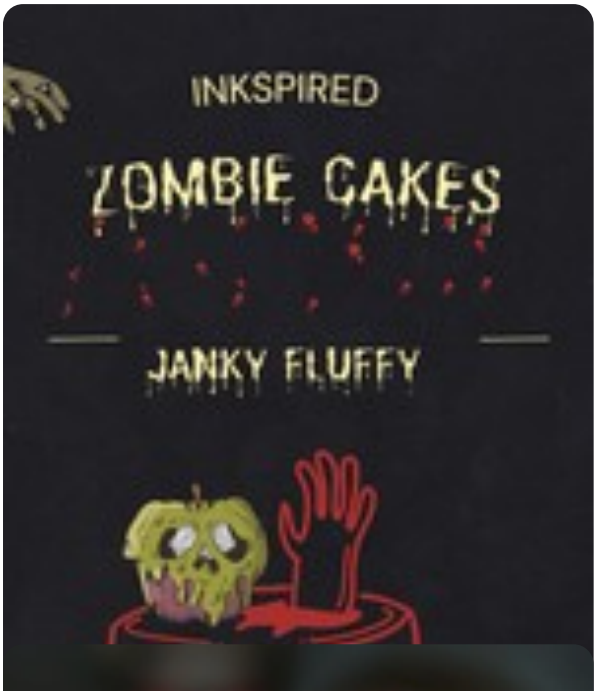
~

Related stories



Gray Aria [Español]
(/en/story/185283/gray-aria-espanol/)

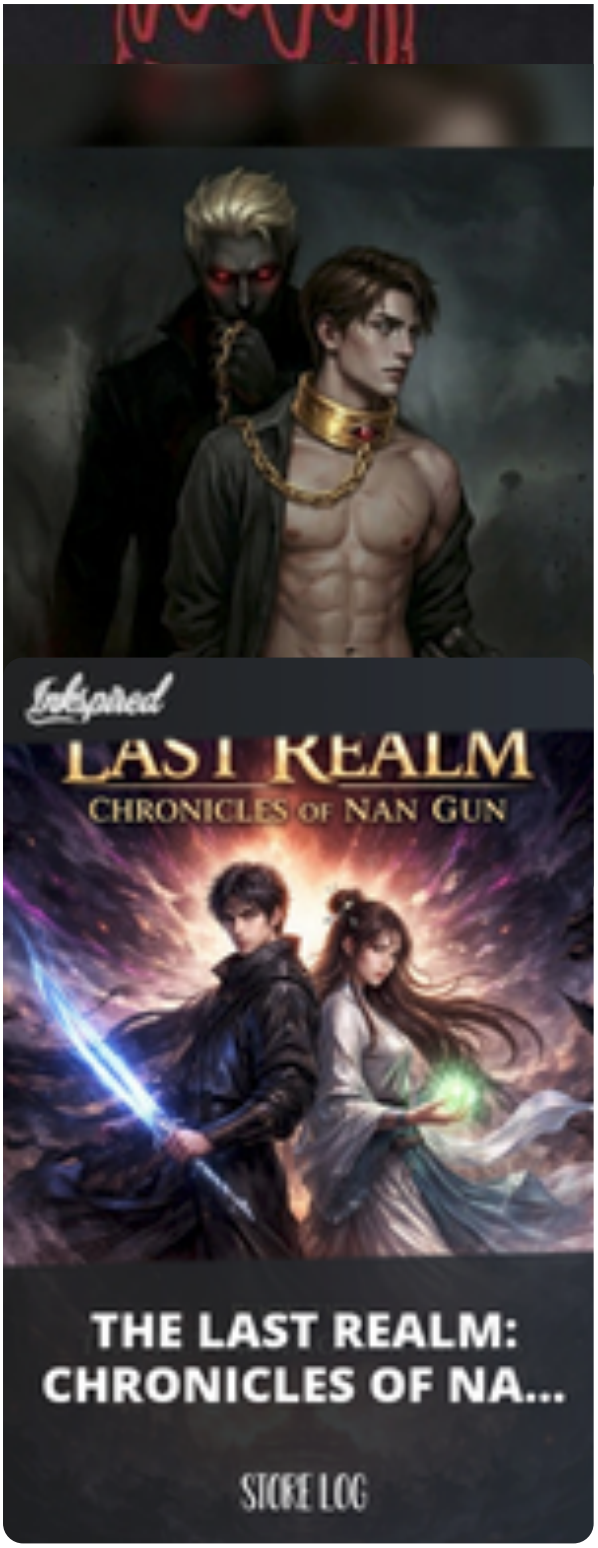
More stories



(/en/)

Pandora: New era

(/en/story/686518/pandora-new-era/)



THE LAST REALM: CHRONICLES OF NAN GUN ...

(/en/story/680599/the-last-realm-chronicles-of-nan-gun-book-one-the-unwilling-seed/)

© 2026 Inkspired®
User-submitted content subject to its own terms.
Proudly made in EC.

Stories that will **inspire** you.

(https://www.instagram.com/getinkspired) (https://www.x.com/getinkspired)

(https://www.facebook.com/getinkspired)

(https://www.youtube.com/@getinkspired)

(https://www.linkedin.com/company/inkspired)
(https://www.producthunt.com/posts/inkspired-2)
(https://discord.gg/ZAKyBsSfnR)

COMPANY

About us (/en/about-inkspired/)

Blog (/en/blog/)

Creators & Authors (/en/creators/)

Rewards Program (/en/rewards-program/)

Inko, Inka & Katze (/en/inko-inka-katze/)

PRODUCTS

Self-publishing services (/en/selfpublishing/)

Inkspired Store (/en/store/)

Mobile app (/en/mobile/)

Inkspired Writer app (/en/writer/)

Upgrade to Premium (/en/premium/?ref=footer)

Universes: Narrative Worldbuilding (/en/universes/?ref=footer)

Collectible Cards (/en/cards/?ref=footer)

Merch Shop (https://shop.getinkspired.com/?ref=website-footer)

COMMUNITY

Read stories (/en/discover/)

Events & Writing Contests (/en/events/)

BETA readers network (/en/beta-readers/)

Become an ambassador (/en/ambassadors/)

Writing tips (/en/blog/944/writers-blog/)

Community Groups (/en/communities/)

Latest Newsletter (/en/newsletter/)

SUPPORT

Community Guidelines (/en/community-guidelines/)

Verified Stories (/en/verifiedstories/)

FAQS (/en/faq/)

Advertisement and
Sponsored content (/en/sponsored-content/)

Contact us (/en/dashboard/getSupport/)

Privacy Policy (/en/privacy-policy/) Terms of use (/en/terms-of-use/)